The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1916 was held in its office at 1729 New York avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Saturday, October 2, 1915. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, the Chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. Hastings;

Mr. Gilbert;

Mr. Blashfield;

Mr. Adams;

also Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. A., Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 9:30 a. m., and proceeded at once to the business before it.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING. The minutes of the preceding meeting, held July 29th and 30th, 1915, were approved in the form transmitted to the members.

2. EMPLOYMENT OF TEMPORARY STENOGRAPHER: The Commission authorized the employment of a temporary stenographer and typewriter for a period not exceeding five days with a compensation at the rate of $4.00 per day, the appointment to take effect October 1, 1915.

3. RECLAMATION OF THE ANACOSTIA FLATS: At 10 o'clock Col. C. A. F. Flagler, U. S. A., in charge of the local United States Engineer Office, - Major C. W. Kutz, U. S. A., the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, - and Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. A., Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, comprising the Board on the Reclamation of the Anacostia River and Flats, conferred with the Commission regarding certain proposed modifications of the original plan already approved by the Commission for the reclamation of the Anacostia River and flats. The proposed changes were outlined in a written report read by Colonel Flagler(Anacostia file, Exhibit of October 2, 1915), and the whole matter thoroughly discussed. As

Mr. Olmsted had in the past given this whole project careful study, he was appointed a committee with power to confer with the Board toward a satisfactory solution of the various problems. He conferred with the members of the Board in Colonel Flagler's office in the Southern Building on the next day (Sunday), when the questions involved were discussed in all phases, and a visit of inspection made to certain places along the Anacostia River. It was believed, in general, that the dam ought to be omitted for the time being, and a width of channel of about 500 feet following approximately the south shore, sufficient to take the maximum flow of the Anacostia floods, should be constructed, having training walls like the portion below; but that the main area to the north should, if practicable, be developed as a fixed level lake, the area depending upon the balance between dredging and fill.

4. COLOR EFFECT DESIRED FOR NEW INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING: The Commission, at 11 o'clock, at the request of the Secretary of the Treasury, met in conference representatives of the Department of the Interior and the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department with regard to the question as to whether brick of a gray range or a red range of color shall be adopted for the new Interior Department building. This representation was headed by Secretary Lane, of the Department of the Interior, who was accompanied by George Otis Smith, Director of the Geological Survey, and Mr. Simons and Mr. Garwood of the Office of the Supervising Architect. Secretary Lane expressed his firm conviction that the building should be constructed of material of such color as would make it as inconspicuous as possible. In this conviction the Commission concurred. The representatives of the Supervising Architect's Office, however, stated that none of the samples set up in the grounds of the Octagon, where the Commission had inspected them before the meeting, suited the responsible officials of the Treasury Department as to color effect, and added that there is nothing in these sample walls which showed what they expected should be done as to color; and that

they felt there was a question as to whether there is not something very much better available than the samples shown. The Commission also stated that none of the specimens appeared ideal to them but that they felt confident that the treatment suggested by Secretary Lane can be obtained by a studied relation of the color of the brick to the mortar areas. They later advised that a neutral color of warm gray tone would be most likely to produce the inconspicuous effect desired. (See Exhibit A.)

5. SIGNS TO MARK THE "BRADDOCK TRAIL" IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: The next question that was given consideration was the request of the District Commissioners for opinion and advice upon certain questions arising in connection with a design for signs proposed by the Daughters of the American Revolution to be placed upon the streets of the District of Columbia to mark the route of the old Braddock trail. A colored blue print showing the design was submitted.

The Commission recommended the disapproval of the design, which was to be executed in the form of enameled signs, and stated that enameled signs regardless of design are not suitable for marking important historical events; that wherever tablets or other historical markers are to be erected, they should be attached to some existing structure so far as possible rather than be erected as a detached object . (See Exhibit B.)

6. FULL-SIZED DETAIL OF BALUSTRADE FOR MERIDIAN HILL PARK: The Commission inspected full-sized details of the balustrade for the upper wall in Meridian Hill Park, prepared by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. These drawings were displayed in the drafting rooms of that office, and desirable changes pointed out to Mr. Peaslee, the draftsman in charge, and to Colonel Harts. These consisted in the main of a modification in the style of balusters, a reduction of the width of the frieze to nine inches, and the elimination of the use of the urns shown. No changes were suggested in the design for the north entrance except a simplified treatment of the exedra wall. (See P. B. & G. plan file Nos: 327:24a,24b,24c, 26b, 26a2,26a3, 26a4, 27a,27b,27c, 28a1, and 26a5.)

7. BUCHANAN MEMORIAL: Mr. Lawrason Riggs of Baltimore, representing the estate of Harriet Lane Johnston, accompanied by Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Beecher, architects, and Mr. Hans Schuler, sculptor, all of that city, appeared before the Commission at 2 p. m., with a modification of their last design for the Buchanan memorial. This design showed not only a revised study of the sculptural group to commemorate President Buchanan, but also a sundial scheme to terminate the lower end of the main axis of the Meridian Hill park, for which the memorial is being planned. The Commission suggested numerous desirable changes in this scheme which they felt should be considered in the further study of that lower end, in particular a more simple treatment of the entrance, and the treatment of the whole area along simpler Italian lines instead of Greek to bring it in close relation to the design for the upper park which is designed along Italian lines. (See Exhibit C.)

8. MEADE MEMORIAL: Attorney General Francis Shunk Brown of the State of Pennsylvania, Mr. John B. Patrick of Harrisburgh and Mr. John W. Frazier of Philadelphia, representatives of the Meade Memorial Commission of the State of Pennsylvania, accompanied by their architectural adviser, Professor Warren P. Laird of the University of Pennsylvania, appeared before the Commission at 3 o'clock. They submitted the report of the architectural adviser, which was approved. In this report the relative advantages of three sites in the Botanic Garden area, marked A, B, and C, were discussed, with the recommendation that the memorial should be placed upon the plot marked A. It was the sense of the Commission that site A would be satisfactory unless it should be developed by the study of the entire area (as was proposed in the report) that another site will be better. (See Exhibit D.)

9. CAPITOL FRIEZE: Report to the Senate Committee on the Library upon S. J. Res. 156, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the completion of the historical frieze in the Rotunda of the Capitol building, was deferred until the next meeting, because lack of time prevented a desired consultation with Mr. Elliot Woods, Superintendent of the Capitol Buildings and Grounds, with reference to the matter.

10. FIVE PORTRAITS OF FORMER JUSTICES OF THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT: The Commission in a report to the Senate Committee on the Library dated January 16, 1915, on an amendment to H. R. 17041, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the purchase of oil portraits of 25 former justices of the United States Supreme Court, painted by Mr. Albert Rosenthal, reserved their recommendation with reference to the portraits of Justices Peckham, Brown, Harlan, Brewer, and Moody until a later date. The Commission at this meeting recommended the acceptance of the five above mentioned on the same basis as the twenty previously reported on, namely, rather as historical documents than as works of art. In case of their acceptance the Commission made the further recommendation that the portraits be reduced to the dimensions in each case of the dimensions given to each of the twenty canvasses previously reported on in order that no factitious distinction may appear to be made by the sizes of the canvasses and so that, in case they should ever be panelled into walls, parity of size would be convenient to the process of panelling. (See Exhibit E.)

11. LOCATION FOR BARTHOLDI FOUNTAIN: The completion of the Grant Memorial and the location of the Meade Memorial in the Botanic Garden grounds soon will require the removal of the Garden and the Bartholdi fountain. Colonel Harts, in anticipation of a request for suggestions for a new site for the fountain from the Joint Committee on the Library during a conference soon to be held on the subject, laid

before the Commission the questions of the possibility of using the reservation at Columbia Road and 16th street, or the south end of the Connecticut avenue bridge, or the open space in the center of Lincoln Park for this purpose. The Lincoln Park site was staked out to show the circumference of the fountain, and a pole had been erected indicating its height. Mr. Olmsted, as a committee of one, inspected the Lincoln Park site, and gave as his opinion that the fountain could be placed there advantageously if it became available for transfer.

12. TREATMENT OF THE VICINITY OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL: Mr. Clarence E. Howard, who has been authorized by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to prepare a plan for the landscape treatment of the area lying between Seventeenth street and the Potomac River, and B street north and B street south , after conferring with members of the Commission individually at their offices, was ready to submit preliminary sketches to the Commission in order to learn whether the Commission considered him to be proceeding along right lines with his studies. The Commission went over these sketches with him in a general way and offered their criticisms of the various features embodied in the sketches, at the same time pointing out what features would be more desirable than others.

13. PUBLIC RECREATION GROUNDS IN EAST POTOMAC PARK: The Commission also inspected progress sketches showing an informal landscape treatment of the portion of East Potomac Park lying east of the railroad embankment, prepared by Mr. J. G. Langdon under the direction of Colonel Harts and Mr. Olmsted. It was the sense of the Commission, after a brief discussion, that the plans were progressing along right lines.

14. SECOND SECTION OF ROCK CREEK PARKWAY: Colonel Harts also laid before the Commission for comment a study of design for that portion of the proposed Rock Creek parkway lying between L street and P street, northwest, made to determine the proposed taking lines for that area. The Commission discussed the various features of the study,

and, among other suggestions offered, it was the general opinion that so far as possible the leaving of pieces of land upon which structures could be erected in such a way that their backs would face the parkway should be avoided.

There being no more business to come before the meeting, the Commission adjourned at 5 p. m., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Approved:

Chairman.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington, D. C. October 2, 1915.

Sir:

In accordance with the request of your letter of September 16th, the Commission of Fine Arts today met the Honorable, The Secretary of the Interior, and the Director of the Geological Survey, chairman of the building committee for the new building of the Department of the Interior, together with representatives of the office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, in conference as to the color of brick to be used in the Interior Department building.

The Secretary expressed his conviction that the building should be constructed of material of such color as would make it as inconspicuous as possible. The Treasury Department officials are in accord with the Secretary, but there is a difference of opinion as to the color of the brick to be used.

It is impossible to make inconspicuous a building of the height and bulk of the structure now under construction; but its obtrusiveness may be diminished by choosing a color of brick and a color and width of mortar joint which in combination will produce in the completed brickwork a neutral color of warm gray tone.

Respectfully,

(Signed) CHARLES MOORE

Chairman.

The Honorable

The Secretary of the Treasury.

A

October 2, 1915.

Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting today, gave careful consideration to the request in your letter of August 13, 1915, for an opinion and advice upon certain questions arising in connection with a design for signs proposed by the Daughters of the American Revolution to be placed upon the streets of the District of Columbia to mark the route of the "Braddock Trail", a colored blueprint of which was submitted.

The Commission recommend the disapproval of the design for an enameled sign to mark the Braddock trail through the District. It is their opinion that enameled signs, regardless of design, are not suitable for marking important historical events; also, that wherever tablets or other historical markers are to be erected, they should be attached to some existing structure so far as possible rather than erected as a detached object.

By direction of the Commission:

Respectfully,

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

B

October 8, 1915.

Dear Mr. Riggs:

The sketches which you submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts on October second, and the discussion of these sketches with the architect and sculptor, developed excellent progress towards the end in view.

The Commission felt that a more simple treatment of the entrance would be desirable. Also, that inasmuch as the treatment of the entire park is to be along Italian lines, it would be preferable to have the accessories of the statue show Italian rather than Greek feeling.

These suggestions were fully discussed with you and the architect and the sculptor, and, it is understood, were agreeable to you.

The Commission desire to assure of their appreciation of your continued courtesy and consideration.

By direction of the Commission:

Very truly yours,

WM. V. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Lawrason Riggs, Esq.,

Baltimore, Maryland.

October 8, 1915.

Sir:

Representatives of the Meade Memorial Commission of the state of Pennsylvania, together with their architectural adviser, Professor Laird, appeared before the Commission of Fine Arts at the meeting on October second last. They submitted the report of the architectural adviser, which met the approval of this Commission.

In this report the relative advantages of three sites were discussed, with a preference for the site marked A. The approval of this site was requested. It was the sense of the Commission of Fine Arts that site A would be satisfactory, unless the fact shall be developed by the study of the entire area (as proposed in the report) that another site is preferable.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Hon. M. G. Brumbaugh,
Chairman, Meade Memorial Commission
of the State of Pennsylvania,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

"D"

October 4, 1915.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts in their report dated January 16, 1915, on the amendment proposed to H. R. 17041, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the purchase of oil portraits of 25 former justices of the United States Supreme Court, painted by Mr. Albert Rosenthal, reserved their recommendation with reference to five portraits,—those of justices Peckham, Brown, Harlan, Brewer, and Moody, – until a later date.

The portraits then reported on, twenty in number, were approved rather as historical documents than as works of art. Their character as works of art justified such a provisional acceptance, but was not sufficiently high to provoke any enthusiasm. The Commission would recommend the acceptance on the same basis of the five remaining portraits, provided always your Committee desires to acquire them as historic documents. In case of their acceptance the Commission advise that the artist be instructed to reduce these portraits to the dimensions in each case of the dimensions given to each of the twenty canvasses already reported on. This reduction is suggested, first, for the sake of historic significance in order that no factitious distinction may appear to be made by the sizes of the canvasses, and secondly, because in case these canvasses should ever be panelled into walls, parity of size would be convenient to the process of panelling.

In this connection the Commission desire to call attention again to paragraph 3 of their report of January 16, 1915, as follows:

> ".....the Commission desire to suggest to your committee the advisability of gradually creating a permanent and complete collection of such portraits, and that, in order to ensure adequacy in their painting, as well as of other portraits to be owned by the Government, some regular procedure be approximately followed. In order to establish such a procedure it is suggested that several portrait painters of national reputation should be invited to furnish a list of artists who in their opinion would be able and willing to paint for a reasonable sum in each case, adequate portraits from available data, and that such a list should at all times be available to the committee in charge of the question of such portrait painting.".

By direction of the Commission:

Respectfully,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Hon. Luke Lea,
Chairman, Committee on the Library,
United States Senate.